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UNCLAS SECTION 01 OF 02 BUENOS AIRES 000472

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TAGS: [ECON](#) [AMGT](#) [AFSI](#) [AFSN](#) [ETRD](#) [AR](#)

SUBJECT: ARGENTINA: COUNTRY CLEARANCE FOR FSI ECONOMICS DIVISION
PROFESSOR LYNDIA D. VARGHA

REF: DIRFSINFAT 04010877

11. Post warmly welcomes and grants country clearance to FSI Economics Division Professor Lynda D. Vargha for the period of April 19-26, 2008. The purpose of the trip is an orientation to Economic Section work and training requirements.

12. Embassy Buenos Aires Control Officer will be ECON Officer Ian Sheridan , who can be reached at (54-11) 5777-4359. Email is Sheridan IM@state.gov. Embassy address: Av. Colombia 4300, Embassy phone 54-11-5777-4555; Embassy fax 54-11-5777-4212. Embassy hours: 8:45 a.m. to 5:45 p.m.

13. Visas: Visitors are reminded that Argentina requires visas in U.S. diplomatic and official passports for official travel. Persons traveling on official business and carrying diplomatic or official passports who arrive without a valid visa may be denied entry and sent back to point of origin. The Embassy is unable to secure entry of travelers who arrive without visas.

14. Airport tax: All American visitors, including those holding official or diplomatic passports are required to pay the airport tax when departing Argentina. For international flights, the tax is US\$18 per passenger (VAT-exempt) or peso equivalent, payable in cash.

15. Administrative support:

a. If administrative support services are necessary, regardless of length of stay, then the visitor must be able to present to the Financial Management Office their travel authorization (or another fund cite) in order to pay for direct costs of the visit. Each agency, organization, or visiting delegation will be charged for the actual costs attributed to their visit and will be advised of this action. Direct charge costs include, but are not limited to: American and LES staff overtime, field travel-lodging and M&IE by Embassy employees, vehicle rentals, long distance telephone calls, equipment rentals, office supplies and all other costs that are directly attributable to the visit.

b. Also, for TDYers staying over thirty (30) days, there will be a charge for ICASS support services. If your sponsoring agency is not signed up for ICASS services at post, please be prepared to sign an MOU for ICASS support services upon arrival. The agency should provide post with written communication generated by the traveler's headquarters that confirms the agency will pay ICASS charges for the TDYers, provide the agency ICASS billing code the TDY support charges should be applied to, and should authorize the traveler to sign the ICASS invoice generated by the TDY module. Where travel is urgent, the TDYers should bring this documentation with them to ensure there are no interruptions in the provision of service. Post will not provide any service to a TDYer staying in excess of thirty days without provision of this documentation before day 31 of the TDY.

16. Threat assessment:

a. Political violence/terrorism: Liaison with host government police and security forces indicate there is little threat to U.S. citizens (official visitors, business visitors, tourists) from indigenous terrorist organizations in Argentina. There are no violent domestic groups currently active in this country that are specifically targeting U.S. interests. However, given the presence of members of and support for extremist international terrorist groups such as Hizbollah in the tri-border region of Argentina (Misiones Province), visitors here cannot discount the possibility of terrorist activity, to include random acts of anti-American violence.

b. Crime: Petty street crime in the city of Buenos Aires and the immediate suburbs continues to be a problem for residents and visitors alike. Burglaries in the more fashionable suburbs have been a particular problem. Visitors to the city of Buenos Aires should be aware of problems with hotel security (i.e. thefts from room) and pickpockets or purse snatching on the streets and public transportation (buses and trains). Pickpockets often work in pairs and employ a variety of ruses to victimize the unsuspecting visitor. In recent years, most crime affecting visitors has been non-violent; aggravated robberies, shootings, etc., while not completely unheard of in the city of Buenos Aires were, nonetheless, uncommon. Recently, however, incidents of armed invasions of restaurants, shops and residences by criminal groups are being observed with greater frequency, and as a result, it is recommended that due caution be exercised when traveling about the city. However, in general, the crime level in Buenos Aires is less severe than in large U.S. cities.

17. Exchange facilities: The Argentine peso, which is currently exchanged at a floating rate, is the official currency.

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Traveler's checks may be accepted by hotels but are not widely accepted by other businesses or establishments. There is a wide network of ATMs that honors U.S. issued ATM/debit/credit cards issuing funds in pesos. Travelers are reminded to exercise the same caution when using an ATM as one would in the United States.

18. Embassy access: State Department employees should bring their State ID cards/building passes to Buenos Aires to facilitate access to the Embassy. If other visitors need unescorted access to the Embassy, please provide security clearance information in writing via cable or by bringing a letter signed by the appropriate authority. Visitors whose clearances have not been verified must be escorted at all times in the Embassy.

19. Telephone calls: Visitors should bring a fund cite or credit card to cover the cost of official international and in-country long distance telephone calls. International calling cards are recommended.

110. Laptop computers/digital cameras: Laptops/palm pilots, cellular phones and other electronic devices may not be brought into the Embassy without the prior approval of the Regional Security Office. Personally-owned laptops/palm pilots may not/not be used in the Embassy. USG-owned laptops may only be used in controlled access areas (CAA) if the user certifies that the computer has been continuously under the personal control of a cleared American throughout transit. If this requirement is not met, the laptop can only be used outside the CAA. USG-owned palm pilots are under the same restrictions as cellular phones and other electronic devices, and may not be utilized within the CAA. At the Embassy, all USG-issued or personal cellular phones must be left outside the CAA. Use of cellular phones outside the CAA is not restricted. It should be noted that if a traveler is bringing a cellular phone into the country, Argentine law requires the traveler to declare the phone, including its value, when filling out the customs and immigration declaration form.

111. Mandatory personal security training: All personnel requesting country clearance to perform duty for 30 days or more at an overseas

location must have completed the mandatory personal security training ("Serving Abroad for Families and Employees" (S.A.F.E.) course) conducted at the FSI, prior to their travel.

¶12. For further general information regarding travel to Argentina, travelers should consult the Department of State internet site at <http://travel.state.gov/> which includes the latest consular information sheet for Argentina.

¶13. We look forward to meeting and working with you.

¶14. To see more Buenos Aires reporting, visit our classified website at: <http://www.state.sgov.gov/p/wha/buenosaires.>

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